



NEWS RELEASE

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MOST NEBRASKA SCHOOL DISTRICTS DEMONSTRATE IMPROVEMENT, GROWTH IN NEW STATE ACCOUNTABILITY RANKINGS

Nearly three of every four districts graduated 90 percent or more of their high school seniors.

A report on Nebraska public schools and student performance unveiled today showed most school districts demonstrating improvement and growth under a new accountability system. The results also showed that nearly three of every four public school districts or 72.3 percent graduated 90 percent or more of their high school seniors.

"The three years of reading scores, the two years of math scores and the four-year cohort graduation rate, for which we have two years of data, have all shown improvement, year to year. This is a credit to teachers and administrators who daily do their job and do the work," said Nebraska Education Commissioner Roger Breed. Breed presented the findings of the annual State of the Schools Report.

The report included the new state accountability results, which are based on state test scale scores. The system called Nebraska Performance Accountability System (NePAS), ranks public school districts by Status, Improvement and Growth. In Status, districts are ranked by average scale scores in reading, mathematics, writing and science; in Improvement, districts are ranked by the differences in the average reading and math scale scores of different students in the same grade; and, in Growth, districts are ranked by the differences in average reading and math scale scores of the same students this year to last year.

The overwhelming number of school districts demonstrated both improvement and growth. That means that a district's average scale score was higher this year when compared to its scale score the previous year. Here are the numbers:

Rankings	READING	MATHEMATICS
IMPROVEMENT	↑ 185 of 248 districts	↑ 177 of 248 districts
GROWTH	↑ 198 of 248 districts	↑ 181 of 248 districts

Under the state accountability system, school districts are also ranked by graduation rates. This year, 180 of 249 Nebraska public school districts graduated 90 percent or more of their high school seniors. More than 50 school districts had a 100 percent graduation rate. Statewide, 88 percent of the seniors graduated from high school, an increase from 86 percent last year.

After Nebraska moved from its previous assessment system to single statewide tests in reading, writing, mathematics and science, the state had no accountability system. The State Board of Education developed NePAS as the new accountability system.

To view the state accountability rankings as well as federal accountability results under Adequate Yearly Progress, go to the State of the Schools report on the Nebraska Department of Education's homepage at: www.education.ne.gov. New in the report is the performance for groups of students, including race and ethnicity, poverty, special education and English Language Learners by district and school building. Students from low-income families, students learning English for the first time in school as well as students with disabilities and migrant students oftentimes have greater challenges in the classroom. Overall, gaps continue to exist in the scores of Hispanic students and black students when compared to the scores of white students.

The state test results for all students as a group as well as the scale scores used in the state accountability results were released earlier but also are available in the new report.

The State of the Schools Report is available on the Nebraska Department of Education's homepage at: www.education.ne.gov.